

Introduction

Leadership in rural communities in much of Zambia, particularly in game management areas, is generally focused around traditional rulers or local chiefs. This system of leadership is hierarchical and is based on the strong power-base of the chiefs, who are the customary land-owners of the land and as such have considerable control over their subjects. The introduction of Zambia's community-based resource management program, known as ADMADE, required the initial support of local chiefs to encourage community involvement in the management of their natural resources. Chiefs therefore became Chairmen of the local Wildlife Management Sub-authority, which was composed of people the chiefs felt could best represent the community in these efforts.

Because the chief's position is hereditary and is essentially for life, chiefs do not have to be accountable to their subjects to win their confidence. ADMADE began its approach not knowing how this traditional system of governance could respond to the challenges of natural resource conservation or how it would deliver monetary benefits from wildlife to the needs of the community. What ensued was a kaleidoscope of community experiences that revealed basic weaknesses with this system of governance. More importantly, it revealed the tendency of people in leadership positions to be more concerned about their own needs rather than those of the community at large. As a result, only those people who could derive material benefit from ADMADE tended to show strong commitment to conservation. In contrast, the large number of households who saw no benefit was less supportive and many of the serious land use conflicts that threatened wildlife populations and the tourism industry continued.

Throughout this period Zambia's National Parks and Wildlife Service (now Zambia Wildlife Authority) monitored ADMADE's progress and maintained a critical perspective for improving its performance. What became clear from this evaluation was that the leadership structure needed a more democratic process to allow community members to participate more directly in determining how household needs should be supported with wildlife revenues.

What followed was a series of community consultations and workshops of ADMADE stakeholders mandated to develop a more balanced leadership that could more fairly represent all households in the community. Specifically, leadership needed to be democratized. It was also believed there was need for more frequent public meetings to make leaders aware of the needs and views expressed by the community. Through this consultative process, a structure was agreed upon that incorporated these concerns. This structure was based on a democratically elected leadership, referred to as the Community Resource Board. It has now become the legal policy governing community-based resource management in Zambia's game management areas.

ADMADE now offers an historical perspective to the impact that traditional and elected forms of leadership have had on conservation and rural development. This paper addresses this topic

by examining how this transition to democratically based community organizations has influenced natural resource conservation and rural development. It also highlights and discusses the various threats these communities with this new leadership now face as they seek the rewards of managing wildlife resources under the ADMADE policy.

The structure

The ADMADE structure is based largely on a community organization centered on village area groups (VAGs). A VAG is defined by a geographic area and represents all the households living within its boundary. Total population size for a VAG is normally in the range of 500 to 1500 people. An ADMADE unit consists of all the VAGs within a prescribed area that corresponds to one or more Chief's boundaries. At the head of this community organization is the Community Resource Board (CRB), a statutory body legally recognized under the Zambia Wildlife Act and registered as a member of The Registered Societies of Zambia. To serve on the Board, members must be democratically elected by their own VAG and must meet certain certifiable qualifications when first nominated. Elections are independently monitored to verify free and fair voting. Chairpersons and other officers of the CRB are elected from among its members. The CRB ensures the revenue benefits from wildlife are fairly and justly distributed among the VAGs and that wildlife management is being effectively administered. It is responsible for providing an account of how community funds were used to support both resource management costs and projects identified and carried out at the VAG level. CRBs are required to have a community constitution that provides rules, regulations, and terms of reference for the community in how it conducts its ADMADE activities.

Chiefs serve as Patrons, who provide cultural and social stewardship to ADMADE activities by helping build village harmony within this structure and improving the accountability of the elected leaders. Previously they were the Chairpersons of the Wildlife Management Sub-authority, which was the earlier community leadership structure. Traditional powers of the chief are recognized and greatly respected in the new ADMADE structure. However, with the legal recognition of the Community Resource Boards (CRBs), there is a significant shift of responsibilities for much of ADMADE's implementation to elected leadership. Functionally, this is carried out through three different technical committees that facilitate and supervise the management needs of community development, natural resources, and financial accountability. The primary tasks of these committees are to ensure VAG-level participation in each of these activities, much of which is coordinated and directed by VAG committees made up of peer groups or special needs groups from their respective community.

A full-time Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) officer trained in CBNRM skills is stationed in each ADMADE area and is called a unit leader. The unit leader supervises residents employed by the CRB to manage and police the natural resources in their area. Referred to as village scouts, these locally employed residents not only monitor these resources and protect against their illegal use, they also assist local farmers in guarding crops from problem animals and help educate members in the community about ADMADE. Supervising the unit leader is the local Resource Management Committee, made up of elected members from each VAG. This committee is responsible for evaluating performance of village scouts, preparing

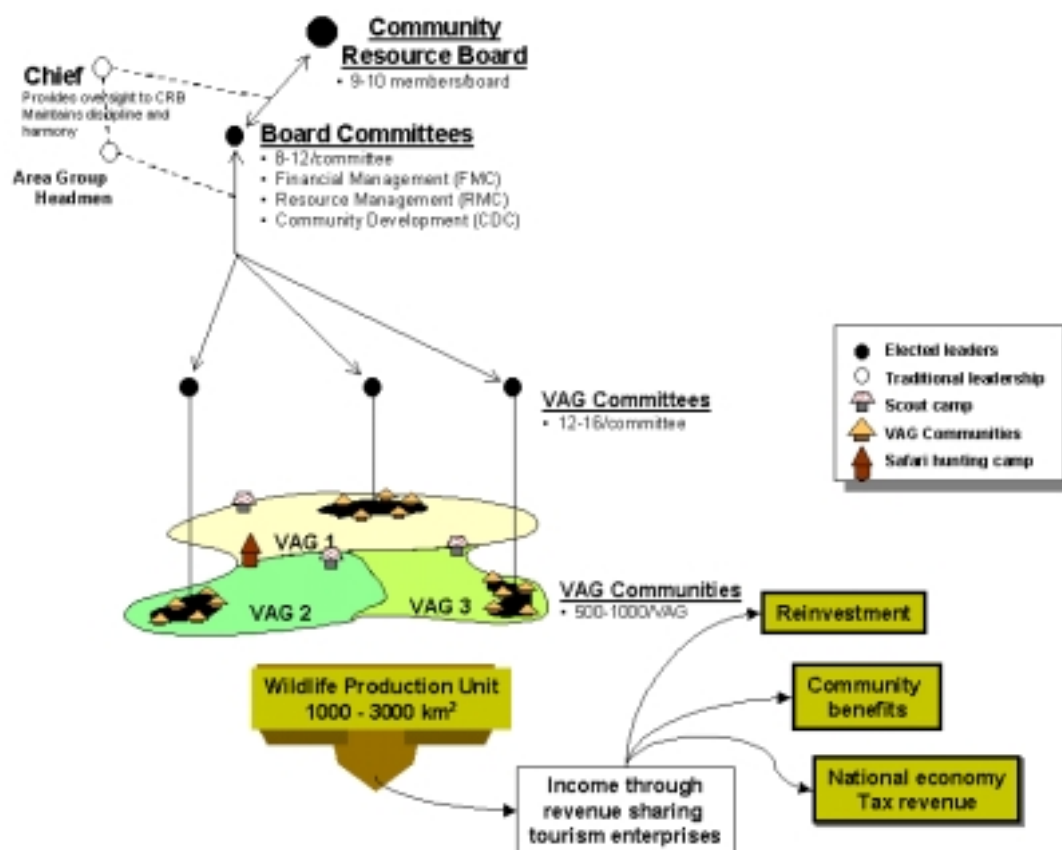


resource management plans and budgets, setting hunting quotas and developing land use plans.

Community bookkeepers are employed by the CRBs to ensure community funds are accounted for and reported to each VAG. Furthermore, separate ledger accounts are maintained for each VAG for shares apportioned. A Financial Management Committee with members from each VAG supervises the bookkeepers and carries out periodic audits of the accounts.

A Community Development Committee provides oversight on the process that allows community members to participate freely in public meetings to plan and decide how their wildlife revenues are to be used to support household needs. It also provides technical support to the VAGs to help with the implementation of projects agreed up their respective VAGs.

A schematic design of this structure is provided in the figure below:



The Lessons

1. People are more likely to contest and vote in CRB elections when politics are left out

CRB elections are preceded by extensive public education about the new ADMADE structure and the role of the elected CRB members. During this pre-election education campaign, voters



were advised that political parties would not be recognized in the election process nor could candidates run on a political party.

There were several reasons for this. One, it encourages more people to contest in the elections since most people in the community are not active in politics or fear being associated with one party over another. Two, a campaign of politicians can be divisive for a community and the purpose of having a CRB is to unite the community around development needs and good leadership. Three, it encourages more people to vote since the issues being contested are not over which party is better but which person has the better ideas and skills for helping the community to solve problems.

2. Elected leaders are made more accountable when they reside in small communities

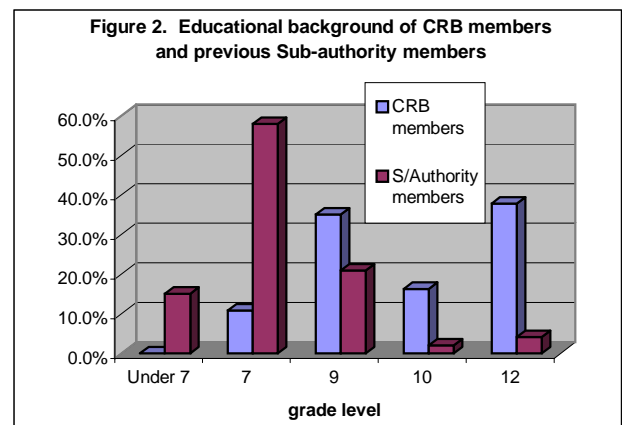
In the new ADMADE structure elected leaders reside within their own VAGs. They are provided with a fixed allowance each month from the community income for the service they render to their community. This entitlement is well known among their constituents and is an incentive to being a CRB member. As a result, voters not only expect good leadership but can observe the way a CRB member performs his or her duties and how well the views and needs of the electorate are being followed. In a community as small as most VAGs are, elected leaders are therefore under considerable pressure to conduct themselves in a responsible manner by working hard, providing good advice and listening and acting on the views of their constituents.

3. Making all community members aware of the constitution reduces risks of poor leadership

Written rules and regulations that govern how ADMADE activities are to be conducted reduce the risk of leaders being unaccountable to their constituents. What are much needed are enough copies in the local language so that the general public will know what is expected of their leaders as well as what their own rights are in participating and benefiting fully from ADMADE.

4. Democratic elections encourage new leaders to be recognized

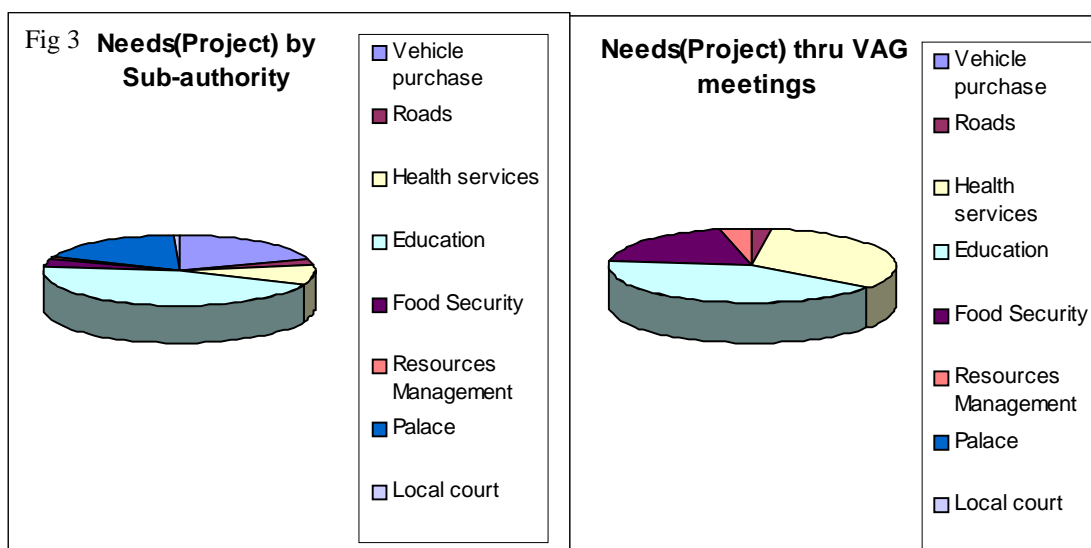
People who were elected as CRB members or VAG committee members in 1999 have generally not had an active role in community leadership before. For example, less than 20 percent of the newly elected CRB members formally served on the sub-authority. Chiefs in the past refused individuals to lead public meetings without the Chief's permission or the Chief's presence. If a Chief wanted to discourage such meetings, which they generally did in earlier ADMADE years, then people had little opportunity to take a more active role in promoting or helping lead ADMADE. The general quality of leaders that emerged from these elections is high based on education and



professional work experience. This quality is in strong contrast to the people who were chosen by the chief to serve on the wildlife management sub-authority (see Figure 2). This might imply that traditional leadership structures promoted people for reasons of loyalty or other attributes that pleased the Chief but not for reasons considered necessary to support rural development and resource management.

5. ADMADE's new structure creates incentives for communities to be democratically organized

Wildlife is viewed a communal property under ADMADE and because it has such a high economic value, the selection process of the CRB leaders is likely to be taken seriously by the public to ensure its full benefits are realized. This was demonstrated by the high turnout of voters for both sexes in the 1999 CRB elections, averaging between 40 and 60%. Given that community revenue shares are distributed fairly among all the VAGs, leadership that is democratic will allow more people to express their needs for how these revenues should be used. Assuming elected leaders promote freedom of expression and allow their constituents to plan the use of VAG profits, then ADMADE incentives will likely foster good governance through democratic processes. The change to a democratic structure of leadership has already shown a striking contrast in development needs being identified by the community. This is attributed to the freedom of community members to express more freely at public meetings and to their elected leaders what they want wildlife revenues to be used for. Figure 3, for example, shows the percentage of projects by category supported under the former wildlife management sub-authority as compared to projects and needs identified through local VAG meeting conducted by elected leaders.



6. Communities without a history of democratic leadership are less likely to support democracy with the necessary skills

The most understood example or model of leadership in communities where ADMADE is practiced is probably that of their local chiefs, who tend to lead by decree with little



consultation with their subjects or through fear of reprisal if respect for their authority is not given. In introducing the new ADMADE structure it is naive to believe that elected leaders will not follow the example of their chiefs unless they have a clear understanding for how to lead differently. It is therefore important and necessary to teach leadership skills soon after elected leaders assume their positions as CRB members.

7. External review and facilitation of the ADMADE structure is crucial to building a foundation for democracy

Good leadership skills can be taught, but only by practicing them will leaders gain confidence and an ability to apply them. This will need additional extension support by trained facilitators visiting the VAGs to observe the quality of leadership and to help analyze possible mistakes leaders may be making. In particular, it will be important that an external evaluation be regularly undertaken to monitor the performance of the CRB Chairman in promoting good leadership among the Board members and efforts by the Patron to help make the democratic process work.

8. Community needs assessment is an important tool for democratic leadership

This activity is carried out at least once a year and allows all members of the VAG to present the needs they feel ADMADE funds should support. The purpose is to use a transparent, participatory process in selecting projects that best meet the needs of the community. The occasion is an important opportunity for elected leaders to facilitate freedom of expression within the community and to help ensure all special interest groups, like farmers, needy families, women clubs and so forth, are heard and can present their problems. Leaders will need to be flexible and arrange a variety of ways people can participate freely and openly to ensure their views are heard. For example, women may be asked to meet as an all women's group to encourage open discussion on issues relevant to them. Special meetings of people known to engage in illegal hunting may be arranged to discuss their problems and reasons why they have to engage in this illegal activity as a way to use ADMADE revenues to support an alternative occupation. Only through a broad-based needs assessment exercise will all households see ADMADE as beneficial to themselves and be prepared to reduce land use disturbances that may conflict with wildlife production.

9. The shift to democratic elections based on secret ballots encourages young leaders to contest and participate in ADMADE

Young adults have the most to gain from the benefits of ADMADE and should therefore participate most actively in over-coming resource management problems and problems of rural poverty. Prior to the new ADMADE structure, sub-authority members were mostly elderly people, and younger aged members represented a low percentage, averaging only 15%. Under the new structure, the percentage of CRB members who are under 35 years of age is between 80 and 90%. In the past when residents were asked to vote for sub-authority members, they often felt compelled to vote for the person favored by the chief. This was because voting was done publicly and people feared voting for someone else. Under the new ADMADE, elections based on a secret ballot and monitored by external observers are



compulsory. This has encouraged more people to contest for positions of leadership and has allowed the electorate to vote freely for one's choice.

Though the quality of leadership by these younger elected leaders is still in the making, there is growing evidence already that they are committing long hours of service. More meetings are being convened and elected leaders are showing more interest in supervising community approved projects. This change in leadership and civic responsibility is helping build public confidence in ADMADE. Though the process is slow and needs much facilitation, it is likely to encourage more people to support conservation as a basis for improving development needs.

10. Public meetings that are issue-oriented improve household participation in conservation and rural development

Public meetings are themselves a democratic institution by allowing residents in a community the chance to observe and appraise their leaders while also providing a forum for people to advocate their views on a particular topic. It is important, therefore, for leaders to enhance the quality of their meetings so that attendance is high and those who do attend participate freely and feel they have contributed positively to ADMADE.

One important way for doing this is to make meetings both issue-driven and people-driven. Important issues that define a meeting's agenda will motivate attendance and will also improve public understanding about the important issues affecting ADMADE's success in their area. Land use planning is one such example. It is a topic that affects the whole community, since most everyone in one form or another extracts resources for their daily needs. A land use planning meeting seeks the views of the public to explain how certain problems like excessive bush burning in their area may be conflicting with an important land use like wildlife production. The issue therefore is whether the community wishes to solve this problem, and if so, how. By using an important issue to draw people together, ownership of ADMADE becomes more community driven, especially if those who do attend contribute ideas toward possible solutions. Leaders facilitating such meetings must ensure public participation is a priority for a successful meeting.

11. Public evaluation of ADMADE to acknowledging mistakes and find solutions will further the democratic process

A young democracy hoping to solve the many challenges facing rural development and wildlife conservation will face a number of tests, which if not handled properly, can derail the whole ADMADE process. Problems will certainly occur and mistakes will be made. What is desirable is to anticipate such difficulties and acknowledge them as part of the growing process communities experience in developing and organizing themselves into democratic institutions. It is also desirable to use past mistakes as a basis for learning how to improve community leadership in subsequent years. Convening a public event each year that allows VAG members to evaluate the year's efforts in implementing ADMADE can do this. Such an exercise will give all participants a chance to learn from any mistakes their leaders may have



made, to contribute positive ideas for finding solutions, and remind leaders of their responsibility to provide reliable service to their constituents.

The Threats

1. Chiefs may feel threatened by not having full control over their subjects and can work against the efforts of the CRB

Unless the Chiefs take the moral high ground and promote qualities of good democratic leadership among the CRB members, there will likely be antagonism between the traditional and elected leadership structures. Unfortunately most chiefs do not have a history of encouraging others in the community to participate in leadership. There are several ways ADMADE is trying to address this problem. For one, Chiefs are given 5% of the community share from the ADMADE revenues as a payment for their responsibilities as Patrons to the CRB. This payment may be more symbolic than an actual payment for service, but by definition a Patron is required to promote democratic leadership qualities among the CRB members. It is hoped that over time this role will be developed. Two, Chiefs are given special training in leadership and community development to facilitate a better understanding of their role in village society under the new ADMADE design. This role is not meant to trivialize Chiefs but to challenge them with more meaningful responsibility under the Wildlife Act for ways their traditional powers can complement the management responsibilities of the CRB. Three, external arbitration services by ZAWA are provided when Chiefs and CRBs fail to understand one-another. This is very important and is much needed so that an impasse does not result in a collapse of ADMADE activities or irreconcilable differences that may spoil working relationships within a community.

2) Community leaders and VAG members are not receiving the full economic value of their wildlife resources and are unable and unwilling to support ADMADE fully

A major percentage (62.5%) of hunting license revenues is taxed before these revenues are returned to the community. In addition, community revenues needed to support village scouts and the critical work they do to protect the resource is typically not returned fully to the community. This results in village scouts being ineffective and gives little confidence to the community that they can make their resources safe for long-term community benefits.

These problems portray wildlife as a resource being owned more by Government than by the community. Such perceptions represent serious threats to ADMADE success by lowering community support for wildlife as an accepted land use approach.

3. Use of wildlife by special licenses is not transparent, earns no revenue for the community and encourages community residents to engage in illegal hunting

Problems of special licenses have persisted for many years, despite repeated outcries from communities participating in ADMADE. As a result, residents become demoralized and reluctant to produce wildlife for community benefits when they see individuals coming onto



their lands to harvest wildlife for personal gain and pay nothing to the community. The conclusion is, 'why can't they as well?'.

4. Community leaders do not feel confident that Government authorities will find solutions to their problems

Distance and poor communication are obvious barriers that separate community leaders from Government authorities, leaving much room for misunderstanding and distrust between these two parties. There is already a growing perception among CRB members that Government is unresponsive to communities' concern over unfair practices of licensing wildlife and how revenues are disbursed. Without a more direct way of maintaining a two-way dialogue between Government and community leaders to promote ADMADE success, this cynicism will persist and may erode community interest in ADMADE.

Discussion

ADMADE is a fledgling form of rural democracy that promotes rural development through conservation and effective marketing of natural resources. Earlier program designs entrusted most of the leadership to traditional rulers or chiefs and because their style of leadership lacked accountability and transparency, ADMADE decisions were frequently made without consultation with local households. The new structure has given communities a chance to apply democratic leadership to the needs of resource management and to rural development.

This shift toward elected leadership has given rise to a new generation of younger leaders. As residents within their own community, they are closely observed and easily criticized when mistakes are made. This is in sharp contrast to ADMADE's previous leadership through the local chief, who could not be criticized because of traditional respect. Selection of elected leaders by a secret ballot revealed voter preference for educated, well-experienced people. Unlike before, ADMADE's democracy has allowed ordinary members in the community greater access to the leaders they have elected to ensure wildlife revenues apportioned to the community are used in ways most beneficial to local households.

Leadership training is key to this process because elected leaders require skills in facilitating community dialogue and condensing this dialogue into meaningful ways that wildlife revenues can best meet the needs of the most people. Such a process is done through a needs assessment exercise, which encourages all households to participate in. Such participation creates improved awareness for why conservation is beneficial while also ensuring the projects agreed upon will be appreciated by a broad range of community members representing different interest groups. The needs assessment process is democratic as well as instructive, as it provides a public forum for people to understand problems other people may be facing which might contribute to land use conflicts that lower wildlife production. In such a way residents are more likely to take a community view for ways community development can improve resource conservation. This is being observed in a number of VAGs where lack of food security is a common problem to many households and forces households without food to set wire snares for obtaining game meat to exchange with maize.



Lack of food security is frequently chosen as a priority need in order to reduce wildlife losses and loss of income to the community.

Through the democratic institutions ADMADE is helping foster, leadership will likely be better able to meet the challenge of making development and conservation more mutually compatible while also fulfilling the needs of the community. If this challenge can be met, an equilibrium in sustaining wildlife resources in areas occupied by rural communities may be attainable. A key assumption underlying ADMADE's success, however, is that Government will support communal ownership rights of wildlife resources and allow communities the full market value of their use. Such ownership rights include legal protection against any use that is economically unfair to the community, who is considered the wildlife producer. This protection would greatly enhance the purpose and importance of democratic institutions in building household commitment to the safety and sustained value of the wildlife populations found on their land. Without these ownership rights, ADMADE may not be able to sustain a community commitment to a democratic process that encourages conservation and the sharing of its benefits for local households.

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